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AUTHOR Fidler, Paul P.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

During the 1976 summer and fall orientation programs, a questionnaire was administered to 2,190 students (75 percent) of the entering freshman class. The survey was part of the American Council on Education's Cooperative Institutional Research Program. The survey report presents a comparative analysis of the various demographic data, opinions, and projections of the class. Comparisons are made with national norms by race and by sex when it is deemed significant. Eleven areas of interest are considered: age, race, average high school grades, highest degree anticipated (at any institution), reasons for college choice, parental income, probable major, religious preference, political orientation, expectations for the future, and fall-term residence. Data are presented in tables, with some notes. (MSE)

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ACADEMIC PLANNING OFFICE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29208

SUBJECT: Profile of USC Entering Freshmen, Fall, 1976

RESEARCH NOTES NO. 34-77 April, 1977

Principal Researchers: Dr. Paul P. Fidler
Academic Planning Officer

Ms. Barbara Alley
Graduate Research Assistant

Ms. Eunice Ponder
Graduate Intern

ACADEMIC PLANNING OFFICE

Research Notes
No: 34-77

Subject: U.S.C. Freshmen Profile - Fall, 1976

Nature and Scope of the Study:

During the 1976 summer and fall orientation programs, a questionnaire prepared by the American Council on Education (ACE) was administered to 2,190 students (approximately 75%) of the entering freshmen class at the University of South Carolina (USC). A total of 393 institutions of higher education including 51 universities also participated in this continuing national study of higher education sponsored by ACE's Cooperative Institutional Research Program.

The following study presents a comparative analysis of the various demographic data, opinions and projections of the entering freshmen class at U.S.C. during Fall 1976. U.S.C. entering freshmen were compared as a whole to the national norms; they were also compared by race for the first time. Sex differences were reported where they appeared to be important. Eleven areas of interest were selected for this analysis from the original 52 areas contained in the questionnaire.[1] These areas were selected to provide a composite profile of the entering freshman at USC, Fall 1976. Each area is presented in tabular form and followed by comments to highlight the major comparisons.

[1]The eleven areas of interest which were considered are:

- Age by December 31, 1976
- Racial background
- Average grade in high school
- Highest degree planned anywhere
- Reasons noted as very important in selecting this college
- Estimated parental income
- Probable major field of study
- Current religious preference
- Political orientation
- Future estimations
- Residence planned during fall term

Table 1

A COMPARISON OF AGE OF USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS AND RACE

Age by Dec. 31, 1976	USC BLACK	USC WHITE	USC TOTAL	NAT'L NORMS
16 or younger	0.8	0.1	0.2	0.1
17	14.5	5.8	7.2	4.0
18	69.8	74.0	73.5	79.9
19	12.5	17.2	16.3	14.3
20-25	1.2	2.5	2.3	1.5
26 or older	1.2	0.3	0.4	0.2

Comments:

1. The percentages of USC entering freshmen by age level were generally the same as the national norms, although USC students were more dispersed over the total range of ages than were students nationally.

2. USC entering freshmen were more likely to describe their age as less than 18 and 19 and older when compared to national norms.

3. A smaller percentage of USC entering freshmen (73.5%) described their age as "18" when compared to the national norm of 79.9%.

4. Among USC entering freshmen, black students were more likely to be younger than 18 (15.3%) than were whites (5.9%). In contrast, white students were more apt to be older than 18 (20.0%) than were blacks (14.9%).

Table 2

A COMPARISON OF AGE OF USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS, RACE, AND SEX

AGE BY DECEMBER 31, 1976	USC BLACK		USC WHITE		NAT'L NORMS	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
16 or younger	1.0	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
17	11.0	16.8	3.0	8.8	3.1	5.1
18	76.0	65.8	73.7	74.3	78.3	81.6
19	11.0	13.5	18.8	5.4	16.2	12.2
20-25	0.0	1.8	4.2	0.8	2.1	0.9
26 or older	1.0	1.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2

Comments:

1. Female entering freshmen were more likely to be younger than 18 both at USC and in the national norms. This distinction held for both black and white students at USC.

2. Similar to the national norms USC white males were more apt than white females to be 19 and older. This finding did not hold true for USC black freshmen, however.

Table 3

A COMPARISON OF RACIAL BACKGROUND OF USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS

RACIAL BACKGROUND	USC	NAT'L NORMS
White/Caucasian	86.1	90.3
Black/Negro/Afro-American	12.8	6.9
American Indian	0.3	0.7
Oriental	0.4	1.4
Mexican-American/Chicano	0.0	0.4
Puerto Rican-American	0.2	0.3
Other	0.4	1.2

Comments:

1. Approximately 85% of USC entering freshmen described themselves as white/caucasian compared to the national norms of 90.3%.

2. Approximately 13% of the USC entering freshmen described themselves as black/negro/afro-american compared to the national norms of 6.9%.

3. Students from other racial backgrounds comprised about 4% of entering freshmen nationally and less than 2% of USC entering freshmen.

Table 4

A COMPARISON OF AVERAGE GRADE IN HIGH SCHOOL OF USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS AND RACE

AVERAGE GRADE IN HIGH SCHOOL	USC BLACK	USC WHITE	USC TOTAL	NAT'L NORMS
A	16.8	15.5	15.6	34.3
B	63.7	62.6	63.1	56.6
C	19.5	21.5	21.1	8.9
D	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1

Comments:

1. USC entering freshmen reported an average grade in high school of "A" considerably less frequently than the national norms (USC 15.6%); National Norms (34.3%).

2. USC entering freshmen were more likely to report an average grade of "B" in high school than were their national counterparts (USC 63.1%); National Norms (56.6%).

3. Average grades in high school were generally the same for black and white USC entering freshmen with overall averages for blacks slightly higher.

Table 5

A COMPARISON OF AVERAGE GRADE IN HIGH SCHOOL OF USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS, RACE AND SEX

AVERAGE GRADE IN HIGH SCHOOL	USC BLACK		USC WHITE		NAT'L NORMS	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
A	11.3	20.1	11.9	19.4	30.4	38.7
B	62.9	64.2	59.0	66.8	57.9	55.3
C	25.8	15.5	28.8	13.8	11.6	5.9
D	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0

Comments:

1. Females are more likely than males to have received an average grade of "A" in high school. This finding holds both for USC entering freshmen and the national university norms.

2. Among USC entering freshmen, both black and white females were more apt to have received an average grade of "A" in high school than were their male counterparts. In addition, they were less likely to have received a grade of "C".

Table 6

A COMPARISON OF HIGHEST DEGREE PLANNED ANYWHERE FOR USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS AND RACE

HIGHEST DEGREE PLANNED ANYWHERE	USC BLACK	USC WHITE	USC TOTAL	NAT'L NORMS
None	0.5	0.8	0.8	1.3
Associate (A.A. or equivalent)	4.2	4.1	4.1	1.1
Bachelors (B.A. or B.S.)	26.0	43.5	41.2	34.2
Masters (M.A. or M.S.)	39.1	26.9	28.6	30.3
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	11.6	9.0	9.3	11.9
M.D., D.O., D.D.S., or D.V.M.	7.0	6.7	6.8	12.0
L.L.B. or J.D. (Law)	9.8	6.2	6.6	7.2
B.D. or M.Div.	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.3
Other	1.4	2.2	2.0	1.7

Comments:

1. Compared to national norms, a smaller percentage of USC entering freshmen planned to pursue all categories of post baccalaureate degrees listed except "B.D. or M.Div." and "other."

2. A higher percentage of USC entering freshmen considered the Associate degree (or equivalent) to be the highest degree they would obtain compared to national norms.

3. A higher percentage (69.4%) of USC black entering freshmen planned to pursue post baccalaureate degrees than USC white entering freshmen (51.6%). The percentage for black USC entering freshmen is higher than the national norms (63.4%).

Table 7

A COMPARISON OF HIGHEST DEGREE PLANNED ANYWHERE FOR USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS, RACE, AND SEX

HIGHEST DEGREE PLANNED ANYWHERE	USC BLACK		USC WHITE		NAT'L NORMS	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
None	1.2	0.0	0.5	1.1	1.2	1.4
Associate (A.A. or Equivalent)	3.5	4.7	1.8	6.6	0.6	1.5
Bachelors (B.A. or B.S.)	23.3	27.9	42.7	44.4	30.3	38.6
Masters (M.A. or M.S.)	34.9	41.9	23.5	30.4	28.9	31.9
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	11.6	11.6	10.4	7.5	13.4	10.1
M.D., D.O., D.D.S., or D.V.M.	9.3	5.4	9.1	4.1	14.4	9.4
L.L.B. or J.D. (Law)	11.6	8.5	9.5	2.7	9.0	5.1
B.D. or M.Div.	1.2	0.0	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.2
Other	3.5	0.0	1.6	2.8	1.7	1.7

Comments:

1. A larger percentage of black male (72.1%) and black female (67.4%) entering freshmen at USC planned to pursue post baccalaureate degrees than the university national norms (male, 67.8%; female, 58.4%).

2. Among USC entering freshmen, females were more apt than males to plan masters degrees, while males were more apt to plan doctorates and degrees in law and medicine.

Table 8

A COMPARISON OF REASONS NOTED AS VERY IMPORTANT IN SELECTING THIS COLLEGE FOR USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS, RACE, AND SEX

REASONS NOTED AS VERY IMPORTANT IN SELECTING THIS COLLEGE	USC BLACK	USC WHITE	USC TOTAL	NAT'L NORMS
Relatives wanted me to come here	11.1	8.0	8.4	5.7
Teacher advised me	4.4	2.1	2.4	3.5
Has good academic reputation	64.8	33.7	37.7	57.8
Offered financial assistance	23.7	6.2	8.5	12.4
Not accepted anywhere else	2.9	2.4	2.4	2.1
Advice of someone who attended	11.6	14.4	14.0	13.6
Offers special education programs	32.1	21.1	22.5	26.3
Has low tuition	22.0	11.8	13.2	13.1
Advice of guidance counselor	7.3	3.2	3.7	5.6
Wanted to live at home	7.4	6.3	6.5	4.5
Friend suggested attending	7.0	9.1	8.7	5.6
College representative	4.6	2.1	2.4	2.2

Comments:

1. In comparison with the national norms, USC entering freshmen were less likely than the national norms to cite the following reasons as very important in selecting their college choice: "has good academic reputation", "offered financial assistance", "offers special education programs", and "advice of a guidance counselor."

Comments (continued):

2. USC entering freshmen were more likely than their national counterparts to cite the following reasons as very important in selecting their college: "friend suggested attending", "wanted to live at home", and "relatives wanted me to come here."

3. The reasons listed most often by USC entering freshmen were: "has good academic reputation" (37.7%), "offers special educational programs" (22.5%), "advice of someone who attended" (14.0%), and "has low tuition" (13.2%).

4. USC black entering freshmen were more likely than whites to be influenced by "good academic reputation", "financial assistance", "special education programs", "low tuition", "advice of guidance counselor", "relatives wanted me to come", "college representative", and "teacher advised me." Reasons noted more often by whites were "advice of someone who attended" and "friend suggested attending."

Table 9

A COMPARISON OF ESTIMATED PARENTAL INCOME FOR USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS AND RACE

ESTIMATED PARENTAL INCOME*	USC BLACK	USC WHITE	USC TOTAL	NAT'L NORMS
Less than $6,000	28.3	3.5	6.8	5.7
6,000 - 9,999	21.5	6.7	8.7	7.3
10,000 - 14,999	27.0	18.0	19.4	18.9
15,000 - 24,000	15.6	34.2	31.7	32.8
25,000 - 34,999	6.8	20.7	18.6	17.3
35,000 - 49,999	0.8	9.7	8.5	9.6
50,000 or more	0.0	7.2	6.3	8.3

*The ACE data were divided into fourteen income levels. For ease of comparison, the levels were combined into the above levels.

Comments:

1. Percentages of USC entering freshmen in various parental income categories are similar to the national norms.

2. USC black entering freshmen were more apt to report lower parental incomes than USC white entering freshmen. Only 10.2% of white students reported parental incomes lower than $10,000 as compared to 49.8% of black students reporting parental incomes of less than $10,000.

3. None of the USC black entering freshmen gave their estimated parental income as $50,000 or more compared to USC white entering freshmen (6.3%) and national norms (8.3%).

Table 10

A COMPARISON OF PROBABLE MAJOR FIELDS OF STUDY FOR USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS AND RACE

PROBABLE MAJOR FIELDS OF STUDY	USC BLACK	USC WHITE	USC TOTAL	NAT'L NORMS
Science and Math	7.2	10.6	10.3	17.6
Social and Behavioral Science	11.6	10.6	9.9	10.6
Arts and Humanities	6.5	9.0	8.1	9.8
Education	9.1	7.4	7.6	6.7
Business	21.2	22.9	22.5	15.7
Engineering	7.9	7.9	7.2	11.9
Health Professions	10.0	10.8	10.8	8.1
Other Fields (Technical)	5.0	4.0	4.1	5.7
Other Fields (Non-Technical)	13.3	10.0	10.3	10.5
Undecided	7.1	8.7	8.6	5.0

Comments:

1. The percentages of USC entering freshmen entering the different major fields of study were generally the same as the national norms, although USC percentages were higher than national norms for business, the health professions, and "undecided" categories.

2. USC percentages were lower than the national norms for science and math and engineering categories.

3. The percentages of USC black entering freshmen entering the different major fields of study were generally the same as the percentages of USC white entering freshmen, with minor differences. Black percentages were higher for education and other fields (non-technical) categories, while white percentages were higher for science and math and arts and humanities categories.

Table 11

A COMPARISON OF CURRENT RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE FOR USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS AND RACE

CURRENT RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE*	USC BLACK	USC WHITE	USC TOTAL	NAT'L NORMS
Protestant	82.8	70.8	71.8	45.0
Catholic	4.6	16.9	15.7	31.9
Jewish	0.0	2.9	2.5	6.9
Other Religions	7.1	2.5	3.1	4.5
None	5.0	7.0	7.0	11.6

*Protestant includes: Baptist, Congregational, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Seven Day Adventist, and other Protestant. "Other" consists of Eastern Orthodox, Latter Day Saints (Mormon), Muslim, Unitarian-Universalist and religion (other).

Comments:

1. USC entering freshmen were more likely to be Protestant (71.8%) and less likely to be Catholic (15.7%), Jewish (2.5%), other religions (3.1%), or hold no religious preference (none 7.0%) when compared to national norms.

2. Black USC entering freshmen (82.8%) were more likely than white freshmen (70.8%) to be Protestant.

3. White USC entering freshmen were more likely to be Catholic and Jewish than USC black entering freshmen.

Table 12

A COMPARISON OF POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS AND RACE

POLITICAL ORIENTATION	USC BLACK	USC WHITE	USC TOTAL	NAT'L NORMS
Far Left	3.6	1.5	1.8	1.7
Liberal	31.2	25.9	26.7	29.2
Middle-of-the-road	57.1	56.0	56.1	52.6
Conservative	6.9	15.6	14.3	15.8
Far Right	1.2	1.0	1.0	0.7

Comments:

1. Political orientations of USC entering freshmen were particularly close to the national norms with most students describing their positions as "middle-of the road."

2. USC entering black freshmen described themselves as more liberal while USC entering white freshmen described themselves as more conservative.

Table 13

A COMPARISON OF POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS, RACE, AND SEX

POLITICAL ORIENTATION	USC BLACK		USC WHITE		NAT'L NORMS	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Far Left	2.0	4.7	1.7	1.2	2.1	1.3
Liberal	36.4	27.7	27.3	24.4	30.2	28.1
Middle-of-the-road	50.5	61.5	51.7	60.5	48.3	57.3
Conservative	10.1	4.7	17.5	13.6	18.3	13.0
Far Right	1.0	1.4	1.8	0.2	1.0	0.3

Comments:

1. When compared to females, males were more likely to hold liberal or conservative views. However, black females were somewhat more likely to hold extreme views than black males.

Table 14

A COMPARISON OF PLANNED RESIDENCE FOR FALL TERM OF USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS AND RACE

RESIDENCE PLANNED DURING FALL TERM	USC BLACK	USC WHITE	USC TOTAL	NAT'L NORMS
With parents or relatives	30.5	29.7	30.2	17.6
Other private home or apartment	8.2	4.9	5.3	2.6
College dormitory	60.5	63.5	62.8	76.4
Fraternity or sorority house	0.0	0.6	0.5	1.1
Other campus housing	0.8	0.8	0.7	2.0
Other	0.0	0.6	0.5	0.3

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Comments:

1. When compared to national norms USC freshmen (62.8%) were less likely to live in a college dormitory than the national norms (76.4%), however, USC freshmen (30.2%) were more likely than national norms (17.6%) to live with parents or relatives.

2. USC black and white freshmen reported similar plans for residency with blacks (8.2%) somewhat more likely to live in private homes or apartments than whites (4.9%).

Table 15

A COMPARISON OF FUTURE ESTIMATIONS MADE BY USC ENTERING FRESHMEN BY UNIVERSITY NATIONAL NORMS AND RACE

STUDENTS ESTIMATE CHANCES ARE VERY GOOD THAT THEY WILL	USC BLACK	USC WHITE	USC TOTAL	NAT'L NORMS
Change major field of study	9.1	15.7	14.9	14.2
Change career choice	5.4	14.4	13.3	13.7
Get a job to pay college expenses	29.3	32.5	32.1	41.6
Work at outside job	22.1	19.2	19.9	18.0
Join a fraternity or sorority	19.5	24.3	23.6	19.3
Be elected to an honor society	5.9	4.6	4.8	9.7
Graduate with honors	8.6	7.2	7.4	13.2
Make at least a "B" average	31.4	33.3	33.3	47.6
Need tutoring in some courses	14.6	5.0	6.3	6.7
Seek vocational counseling	7.1	5.0	5.2	8.1
Get a bachelor's degree	72.8	75.1	74.9	79.5
Transfer to another college	4.1	7.7	7.3	7.9
Be satisfied with college	61.5	59.2	59.5	56.7
Find a job in preferred field	59.5	67.7	66.8	62.2
Marry within a year after college	14.5	18.0	17.6	15.6

Comments:

1. Approximately 75% of USC entering freshmen estimated that chances were very good that they would "get a bachelor's degree"; over half (59.5%) reported they would "be satisfied with college"; and 66.8% estimated they would probably "find a job in a preferred field."

2. When compared to national norms a lower percentage of USC entering freshmen estimated that chances were very good that they would "get a job to pay college expenses" (USC 32.1%; national norms 41.6%).

Comments (continued):

3. Slightly more USC entering freshmen (23.6%) estimated that chances were very good that they would "join a fraternity or sorority" when compared to the national norms (19.3%).

4. A much smaller percentage of USC entering freshmen when compared to national norms estimated that chances were very good that they would "make at least a "B" average", "graduate with honors", or "be elected to an honor society."

5. A lower percentage of USC entering freshmen (5.2%) estimated that chances were very good that they would "seek vocational counseling" than the national norms (8.1%).

6. USC entering freshmen were somewhat more likely than the national norms to estimate that chances were very good that they would "marry within a year after college."

7. USC black freshmen (14.6%) estimated chances were very good that they would "need tutoring in some courses" more often than did USC white freshmen (5.0%).

8. More USC white entering freshmen (32.5%) estimated that chances were very good that they would "get a job to pay college expenses" than USC black entering freshmen (29.3%) but were less likely (19.2%) to "work at an outside job" than USC black freshmen (22.1%).

9. USC black freshmen (5.4%) estimated chances were very good that they would "change career choices" less often than white USC freshmen (14.4%).

10. A lower percentage of USC black freshmen (59.5%) estimated that chances were very good they would "find a job in preferred field" than did USC white freshmen (67.7%).

11. More USC white freshmen (15.7%) estimated that chances were good they would "change major field" than did USC black freshmen (9.1%).

SUMMARY

Profile - The typical entering freshman at USC for Fall 1976 was:

- 18 years of age
- a white caucasian
- a "B" student in high school
- planning to achieve at least a bachelors or masters degree
- likely to have selected USC for its good academic reputation and because it offers special education programs
- probably from a family with an annual income of between $15,000 and $19,000
- a business, health or non-technical field major
- a protestant
- "middle-of-the-road" politically
- residing in a college dormitory

Profile - Compared with entering freshmen nationally USC entering freshmen were:

- less likely to have maintained an "A" average in high school but were more likely to have maintained a "B" average
- less likely to cite "good academic reputation" as a reason in making their college choice
- more likely to be black
- generally less confident academically and less likely to seek an advanced degree
- more likely to be Protestant; less likely to be Roman Catholic and more likely to have a religious preference
- more likely to live with parents or relatives and less likely to live in a college dormitory
- more likely to receive support from part-time employment

SUMMARY

A COMPARISON OF FALL, 1976 BLACK AND WHITE USC ENTERING FRESHMEN

- black freshmen were younger
- black freshmen were more likely to plan post-baccalaureate degrees
- black freshmen estimated parental income as much less than that of white freshmen
- black and white freshmen had generally the same average grades in high school
- black freshmen were more likely to be influenced by "good academic reputation" and "offered financial assistance" when selecting USC
- black students were more likely to choose education and non-technical fields as probable major fields of study while white freshmen chose science and math and arts and humanities
- white freshmen were more likely to be Catholic and Jewish
- black freshmen were more likely to have a liberal political orientation
- black freshmen were more likely to live in private homes or apartments
- white freshmen were more likely to estimate that chances were very good that they would "change major field", "change career choice", "join a fraternity or sorority", "transfer to another college", and "find a job in preferred field"
- black freshmen were more likely to estimate that chances were very good that they would "need tutoring in some courses", "be satisfied with college", and "work at outside job"